

The next major task was the codification of the Macedonian language, since all documents written by the Yugoslav communists were either in Serbian, or more rarely, in an incoherent mixture of Macedono-Bulgarian dialects. Tito left the task for the creation of the Macedonian alphabet and orthography to Blaže Koneski, who became the Chairman of the Linguistic Commission in 1944–1945, which came up with a Macedonian alphabet on 3 May 1945. It was identical with the Serbian alphabet, except for the new letter *z*, which had to represent the consonant *dz*, found only in a handful of words. The Macedonian orthography became a reality on 7 June 1945 and the first Macedonian grammar appeared in 1952.<sup>139</sup> The central Macedonian dialect of Bitola-Veles was taken as the literary norm, as theoretically this dialect was equally distant from Bulgarian and Serbian. There were heated debates among the members of the Linguistic Commission. Koneski wanted the replacement of Bulgarian words with Serbian, as much as possible to maximally differentiate the new language from Bulgarian, whereas Venko Markovski opposed the total Serbianization of the language. Georgi Kiselinov said during the Commission proceedings:

We do not have the time to wait for this language to be born. We are in great need of a literary language, and have no time, and cannot wait for this language to be made by poets, writers and journalists. In France, as a literary language, the Paris dialect

137 *Ibid.*, 242–4; Tzarnushanov, *The Macedonism*, 221–5.

138 Poulton, *Who Are the Macedonians*, 118–19.

139 Poulton, *Who Are the Macedonians*, 116–17.

is taken, in Russia – the Moscow dialect, in Serbia – the Herzegovina dialect. From these dialects a literary language has developed. But, as I have said, we have no time to wait for one of our dialects to be developed into a literary language.<sup>140</sup>

In other words, the new language had to be created as quickly as possible. In order to differentiate it from the Bulgarian language, the stress of the words was accepted to be on the third syllable from the end of the word, regardless of the opposition by Markovski. He argued that the new language would lose its melody and the poems of the nineteenth century poet Konstantin Miladinov would not sound well in the new language, since these poems followed the Bulgarian language intonation.<sup>141</sup> Markovski could not comprehend that the new Macedonian language, similar to Karelian and Moldovan, was based more on political calculations than on linguistic considerations. Despite these attempts at creating a different language and the total ban on Bulgarian books and other printed materials in Macedonia, the new Macedonian language shared every distinguishing feature with Bulgarian, which differentiated the Bulgarian language from the other Slavic languages – the postpositive definitive article, lack of cases and infinitive form, etc. Thus, the Austrian linguist Otto Kronsteiner, half-jokingly called the Macedonian language a 'Bulgarian language, written with a Serbian typewriter,'<sup>142</sup> whereas the American linguist James F. Clarke, born and raised in Vardar Macedonia as a son of American missionaries, not only confirmed that Macedonians spoke Bulgarian, but added: 'For Macedonians to deny their Bulgarian heritage is like Peter denying Christ, but Peter repented!'<sup>143</sup> Horace Lunt and Victor Friedman also admitted that the argument over the Macedonian language is more political than linguistic even if they argued that Macedonian was a distinct language. Victor Friedman noted that in Scandinavia, Danish, Norwegian and Swedish are

140 'Stenografski beleshki od konferentsiite na filoloshkata komisija za ustanovuenje na makedonskata azbuka i makedonskijat literaturni jazik' [Stenographic Notes of the

very close to one another and mutually intelligible, with a lexical proximity up to 85 per cent. Instead of looking for differences, however, the Scandinavian countries are proud that they do not need interpreters when they negotiate treaties.<sup>144</sup> The rationale behind the codification of the Macedonian language is quite clear: it is more political than linguistic, because Tito and his Macedonian protégés realized that in the Balkans, without a separate language, similar to Moldova, the other countries would not consider the Macedonians as a separate nation, so they needed a linguistic marker. Despite the fifty-year isolation of Bulgarian and Macedonian languages, the introduction of Serbian terms, an alphabet almost identical to the Serbian one and the total ban on Bulgarian literature in Macedonia, the Macedonian language continues to be very close to Bulgarian despite phonetic spelling as opposed to the Bulgarian morphological spelling. In fact, the Macedonian vocabulary continues to be about 90 per cent identical with the Bulgarian vocabulary as Table 2 (overleaf) demonstrates. Similar to Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian/Montenegrin and Romanian/Moldovan, Macedonian is accepted as a separate language due to political correctness in academic circles, rather than being based on linguistics.

Another important decision of the Yugoslav authorities was the change of the Bulgarian last name endings -ov, -ev in Macedonia with -ski. In fact, fewer than 10 per cent of last names in Bulgaria still have -ski endings, but -ov, -ev are predominant. Lazar Koliševski, born with his Bulgarian name Lazar Kolishev; Blaže Koneski, born as Blagoy Konev and studying in Serbia as Blagoje Konjević; Mihajlo Apostolski, born as Mihail Apostolov; and other pro-Tito communists voluntarily changed their names to demonstrate their fidelity to Tito and their contempt for their Bulgarian

144 Horace G. Lunt, 'Time and the Macedonian Language' In Christina Kramer and Brian Cook eds. *Guard the Work Well Round: Proceedings of the Third North American*